

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13

FEA-01 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIEP-01 COME-00 EB-07

FPC-01 INT-05 OMB-01 SAM-01 OES-06 STR-04 TRSE-00

ACDA-07 /113 W

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R 301505Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4188

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG, RW, UG

SUBJECT: RWANDA WEATHERING LATEST FUEL CRISIS

REF DAR ES SALAAM 2757

SUMMARY: CURRENT GASOLINE SHORTAGE BEING ACCEPTED WITHOUT SERIOUS DISLOCATION RWANDAN COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES. RELATIONS UGANDA BECOMING STRAINED WHILE UNEXPECTED ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY BURUNDI AND TANZANIA EXPECTED BRING NEIGHBORS CLOSER TOGETHER. END SUMMARY

1. IN THEIR CHARACTERISTICALLY STOIC MANNER, RWANDANS WEATHERING LATEST FUEL CRISIS WITHOUT MUCH ADO. SINCE ONLY A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION USES GASOLINE (BULK IS FOR COMMERCIAL/MILITARY/EXPATRIATE USE) LACK OF CONCERN AT ORDINARY CITIZEN LEVEL NOT SURPRISING. LONG LINES AT KIGALI'S SERVICE STATIONS REMAIN ORDERLY AND LOCAL MERCHANTS ATTEMPTING

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MAINTAIN BUSINESS-AS-USUAL ATTITUDE.

2. COFFEE - IN ADDITION TO LACK POL PRODUCTS, MAJOR GOR CONCERN RE BORDER CLOSURE HAS BEEN MAINTAINING RHYTHM COFFEE EXPORTS TO MOMBASA. FOR WEEK ENDING JULY 30 COFFEE EXPORTS TOTALLED 1000 TONS OR PRACTICALLY NORMAL RATE FOR SEASON. EXPORTERS STATE THAT TRUCKS ARE PROVIDED WITH SUFFICIENT FUEL TO TRANSIT UGANDA/REACH ELDORET, KENYA. ON ISOLATED OCCASIONS UGANDAN SOLDIERS HAVE DRAINED TANKS, HOWEVER, OTHER TRUCKS IN COFFEE CONVOY HAVE SHARED FUEL.

3. GASOLINE - TRADE SOURCES STATE IN PAST WEEK 5 OR 6 TANKERS HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TRANSIT UGANDA FROM KENYA. ON ARRIVAL KIGALI ALL WERE COMMANDERED BY GOR FOR PRIORITY NATIONAL PROJECTS, I.E., PRC ROAD CONSTRUCTION AND ARMY. VIRTUALLY ALL GASOLINE AVAILABLE FOR RETAIL SALE IMPORTED FROM BUJUMBURA. GOR PRESIDENCY OFFICIAL STATED THAT IN RESPONSE TO APPEAL BY PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA, BURUNDI AGREED MAKE AVAILABLE 25 PERCENT ITS APPX. 200,000-GALLON RESERVE AND THIS BEING TRANSPORTED KIGALI BY LIMITED NUMBER TANKERS AVAILABLE. (MOST GOR TANKERS STRANDED KENYAN SIDE UGANDA BORDER.) OFFICIAL SAID BURUNDI ASSISTANCE IN RWANDA'S HOUR OF NEED VINDICATED PRESIDENT'S CONTINUED POLICY RAPPROCHEMENT GOB. SMALL AMOUNT POL ALSO ARRIVING FROM TANZANIA. HOWEVER, POOR CONDITION OF ROAD LIMITS TANKER SIZE AND, AS NOTED REFTEL, MAKES COST EXCESSIVE. (GOR WAS UNAWARE OF SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION PETROLEUM NEGOTIATIONS DAR UNTIL BRIEFED BY EMB ON CONTENTS REFTEL).

4. COMMENT: FONMIN TOLD CHARGE JULY 21 ON HIS RETURN FROM KAMPALA, FUEL CRISIS WOULD BE SETTLED "WITHIN 20 DAYS." IT NOW APPARENT HE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC AND WHILE GOR ATTEMPTING MAKE ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, IT COMMONLY AGREED MID-TERM SOLUTION POSSIBLE ONLY THROUGH RESOLUTION KENYA/UGANDA DISPUTE AND CONSEQUENT SOFTENING AMIN ATTITUDE TOWARD RWANDA.

HIGGINS

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